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Sen. Brown Announces Extended Unemployment Benefits *Senate Takes Advantage of Money for Unemployed*

THURSDAY, August 14, 2003 – The state Senate yesterday approved legislation that would allow workers to continue getting unemployment payments while looking for a job, Sen. Cameron Brown, R-Fawn River Township, said.

“Michigan is now able to offer additional assistance to unemployed workers who are searching for a job in today’s market,” Brown said. “The Legislature acted responsibly to ensure that every unemployed family has access to the essential needs of life, including food and money to pay bills.”

On May 28, 2003, President George W. Bush signed legislation allowing for the continuation of the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) program, which provides up to 13 weeks of federally funded jobless benefits to workers who exhaust all of their state unemployment benefits. The TEUC had been scheduled to end on May 31, 2003, but the new legislation continues the program until the end of December 2003. Jobless workers must claim their first week of TEUC by December 27, 2003, in order to receive their full entitlement.

Brown is sponsoring an Economic Summit for the 16th Senate District on Sept. 5 at Hillsdale College, to address how to increase job opportunities across Southern Michigan. Presentations will be given by and additional economic development groups. The forum will bring together local economic leaders, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, the Michigan Chamber and local chambers of commerce, and other trade/industry groups.

“I have received calls from many people who are out of work,” Brown said. “This opportunity given to workers by the federal government is very timely and will help Southern Michigan workers meet the needs of their families while they continue their search for a good-paying job.”

The Bureau of Workers and Unemployment Compensation (BWUC), which administers the state’s unemployment system, estimates that the legislation would provide \$206 million to a approximately 53,000 long-term unemployed workers in the state.

To qualify for the temporary extended benefits under HB 4945 (H-2), unemployed workers must:

- Have exhausted their state benefits;
- Have received their last unemployment check for the week ending on, or after, May 24, 2003; and
- Submit an application for extended benefits with the BWUC.

The \$206 million to unemployed workers is comprised of:

- \$181 million in federal program funds;
- \$23 million from surplus revenue in the UI Trust Fund; *and*
- \$1.75 million from revenue in the UI’s penalty and interests account.